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**CITY OF NEWPORT BEACH
Citizen Advisory Panel Meeting
West Newport Landscaping - Design Guidelines**

Meeting Minutes

**Newport Beach City Hall
Fire Conference Room
3300 Newport Blvd., Building D
Wednesday, September 28, 2011
4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.**

Edward Selich – Council Member Liaison
Kimberly Brandt – Community Development Director
Jim Campbell – Principal Planner
Ben Zdeba – Planning Technician
Dave Webb – Deputy PW Director/City Engineer
Iris Lee – Senior Civil Engineer
Dennis Stone – Project Consultant

Committee Members:
Cindy Koller
Gina Lesley
Jeffrey Morris
Tony Petros
Paul Watkins

The meeting was called to order at 4:05 p.m.

All Committee Members and staff were present.

1. Procedural Items

Dennis Stone gave a brief introduction and reminded the committee that the meeting was subject to the Ralph M. Brown Act.

2. Approval of Minutes from August 24, 2011 Meeting

After a brief discussion and review of the supplemental attachment to the agenda for inclusion in the minutes, the Committee unanimously approved the minutes as modified with the supplemental attachment. Additionally, Cindy Koller voiced the desire of the members of the public who could not attend for more detailed meeting minutes that distinguish between comment by the public and comment by the committee members. It was also requested that the minutes acknowledge the public members present who signed in.

3. Project Scope Review

Iris Lee presented several aerial photographs to define and reiterate the project scope which includes 1) Balboa Boulevard from West Coast Highway to the “Mix-Master”, 2) West Coast Highway from the Santa River to Newport Boulevard, and 3) Superior Avenue from Ticonderoga Street to West Coast Highway. Councilmember Ed Selich presented a slide depicting a “before and after” photograph of a street section in Corona del Mar that was recently improved to demonstrate how much of an impact landscaping improvements can have on a stark streetscape. Mr. Selich also discussed the design process behind the shown improvements.

4. Presentation by Landscape Architects, David Volz and Gary Vasquez – David Volz Design

Dennis Stone prefaced the presentation by distinguishing “building blocks” from specifics and stated the idea is to utilize a universal design theme or palette of conceptual designs that can be applied throughout the project scope.

Balboa Boulevard from West Coast Highway to the “Mix-Master”

David Volz described the existing conditions of Balboa Boulevard and presented a conceptual design to incorporate the existing, tall palm trees and reestablish a rhythm within the median areas. Included in the concept was the addition of canopy trees at the base of each palm in the median, planting of canopy trees on along the parkways, removal of the existing bomanite, and establishment of short sections of unifying “green wall” along the street sides to blend the varying residential property line walls. The Committee generally accepted the basic underlying concept, but raised a few concerns. Ms. Koller questioned how the landscaping would improve traffic safety and lower speeds of automobiles. She also inquired as to how the 38th Street park could be incorporated. The Committee discussed further the idea that landscaping improvements and beautification of streets historically decrease speeds. Jeffrey Morris questioned the addition of more palm trees to the medians. Gary Vasquez of David Volz Design indicated the concept was utilizing existing elements to prevent wasting existing plant materials. Councilmember Selich added that the complete removal and replacement of the palm trees would increase the cost of the project. Tony Petros noted the parkway trees would need to be carefully chosen to prevent a potential nuisance on the residential properties and encouraged the inclusion of a mid-block barrier to discourage

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pedestrians from crossing where they are not supposed to do so. Paul Watkins requested clarification on the clearance of the added canopy trees to preclude larger trucks from catching low-lying branches and driver visibility. Mr. Petros also added that the hanging planters and decorative lighting were mentioned by a member of the public in the previous meeting should not be omitted and requested that it be somehow incorporated into the next meeting.

West Coast Highway from the Santa Ana River to Newport Boulevard

David Volz described the difference between West Coast Highway and Balboa Boulevard by denoting the speed limit is substantially faster and stating the design should be streamlined such that it is interesting at higher speeds. The conceptual design involved creating low-covering green barriers sporadically along the sidewalk to buffer automobile traffic from pedestrian traffic, removing bomanite and replacing with grass-like plantings, incorporating low-level cover around the trunks of shorter palm trees to shield the trunks, and placing mid-level canopy trees throughout the median area. The Committee liked aspects of the design, but wanted to see less palm trees introduced with more leafy, green plants. Jeff Morris liked the idea of date palms with longer massings of luscious plantings. Mr. Petros made note that the bicycle crossover at the Santa Ana River bridge would need to be taken into careful consideration if any sidewalk alterations occur in that area as a 10-foot sidewalk needs to be maintained. Gina Lesley suggested that larger rocks or boulders be placed within the medians to create interesting elements. The Committee also generally discussed that medians should be the main focus prior to giving attention to the parkway.

Superior Avenue from Ticonderoga Street to West Coast Highway

David Volz presented a slide depicting the existing landscaping improvements beyond north of Ticonderoga Street and suggested the Committee carry-forward that design theme south towards West Coast Highway. The conceptual design included existing landscaping elements with new landscaping elements as well as reconstruction of the existing K-Rail to a decorative barrier involving curvature and terracing which embodies the wave-like movements of the ocean. The Committee generally accepted the concept; however, two requests were made. Mr. Petros requested a cross-section of the proposed street be provided at the next meeting and he expressed appreciation for the K-Rail improvement. Mr. Watkins cautioned the Committee that although canopy trees may need to be added to transition to Coast Highway, the view of the ocean from the

sloping Superior Avenue should be maintained and should not be blocked by plantings or any other improvements.

Roundtable Discussion of Project Nodes, Landscape Palettes and Elements

Much of the roundtable discussion took place intermittently throughout the presentation; however, clarification was given to the Committee that specific project nodes such as major intersections and corners would be discussed during the next meeting. Additionally, Mr. Petros wanted to look into using parts of the bike lane widths to create parkway areas for landscaping.

5. Public Comments

Several members of the public provided comments including a suggestion to incorporate flashing crosswalks, incorporate bulb-out planters, an encouraging statement to retain the palm trees as they are not only iconic for the residents, but are a “tourist attraction”. Additionally, members of the public commented on screening Jack in the Box and buffering it from the street, creating meandering sidewalks to break up straight lines, cleaning or screening the plexi glass near West Coast Highway and the Santa Ana River Bridge, and flanking both sides of Balboa Boulevard at West Coast Highway to create an entryway.

Bob Rush urged the Committee to ensure that none of the existing trees are listed as protected within the City’s tree inventory. He also commented that the cost of palm trees is high and cost should be taken into consideration and perhaps the removed palm trees could be reused. Additionally, Mr. Rush noted that proposed groundcover needs to take traffic visibility into account. Lastly, Mr. Rush questioned whether or not the view from Superior Avenue was designated as a “view corridor” by the City’s General Plan.

Principal Planner, Jim Campbell, confirmed the view from Superior Avenue is designated as such.

6. City website – <http://www.newportbeachca.gov/index.aspx?page=1959>
7. Next Meeting – November 9, 2011, 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
8. The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 p.m.